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Letter dated 27 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to attach herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of December 2004, under the presidency of Algeria (see annex).

The assessment was prepared under our responsibility following consultations with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah **Baali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 27 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Algeria (December 2004)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Ambassador Abdallah Baali, Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, the Security Council engaged in an extensive programme of work during the month of December 2004, particularly given the time constraint of completing the programme of work prior to the last week of the month, as is the custom.

During the month the Security Council held 18 consultations of the whole and 10 public meetings, including five open briefings and one open debate (on protection of civilians in armed conflict).

The Council also adopted four resolutions, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, the situation in Liberia, the situation in the Middle East (UNDOF) and the situation in Burundi, and four presidential statements, on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, protection of civilians in armed conflicts, the Middle East and Côte d'Ivoire.

In addition the President of the Security Council exchanged a number of letters with the Secretary-General, notably on the appointment of Terje Roed-Larsen as Special Envoy for the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), on the appointments of four experts to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville.

The President of the Security Council also issued eight notes, notably on the attendance of the newly elected members of the Council at the meetings of the subsidiary bodies before the beginning of their term of membership; and on the renewal of the mandates of the Security Council working groups on peacekeeping operations, general issues relating to sanctions, and conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, also transmitting the reports on their activities (personal report of the Chairman in the case of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations).

Africa

Côte d'Ivoire

On 13 December the Security Council held consultations on the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2004/962), which was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Albert Tévoédjrè. In his presentation he described the political, security and humanitarian situation throughout the country as well as the status of the peace process. He informed members of the Council of the ongoing efforts undertaken by President Thabo Mbeki on behalf of the African Union to reactivate the peace process. He echoed the Secretary-General's recommendation relating to the

reinforcement of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) by the deployment of additional military and police personnel.

Following consultations, the Council on 16 December adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/48) by which it commended the efforts made by the African Union to promote dialogue and relaunch the peace process. The Council underlined that any failure by the Ivorian parties to respect the commitments made to the facilitator, President Mbeki, would constitute a threat to the peace and national reconciliation process. The Council further requested the Committee established by resolution 1572 (2004) to continue its work, taking into account developments arising from the African Union mediation.

Guinea-Bissau

During consultations on 20 December, the Council reviewed the situation in Guinea-Bissau on the basis of the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (UNOGBIS). Following the consultations, the Council unanimously adopted on 22 December resolution 1580 (2004), by which it extended the mandate of UNOGBIS for one year. The Council further revised the mandate of the Office as recommended by the Secretary-General in order to allow it to support the efforts of the national authorities in enhancing political dialogue, strengthening the national mechanisms for conflict prevention and carrying out security sector reform.

Liberia

On 21 December the Security Council considered the Secretary-General's interim report on the activities of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jacques Paul Klein. The Secretary-General stated in his report that, while progress had been achieved in stabilizing the country and in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, many challenges remained to be tackled such as the preparation for the October 2005 election, the resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees, the reintegration of ex-combatants and the extension of State authority nationwide.

The Council also reviewed the regime of sanctions against Liberia on the basis of the findings and recommendations contained in the report of the Panel of Experts (S/2004/955). Following consultations among members of the Council, resolution 1579 (2004) was adopted unanimously on 21 December. By that resolution the Council extended the arms, timber and travel bans for 12 months and the ban on diamonds for a period of 6 months. The Council decided to review measures on diamonds in March 2005. It also decided to re-establish the Panel of Experts until 21 June 2005.

Sierra Leone

On 15 December the Security Council considered the Secretary-General's progress report on Sierra Leone (S/2004/965). The members of the Council were briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, about the situation on the ground in all its aspects and on steps to be taken for the implementation of the drawdown plan of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, leading to the residual presence.

Sudan

On 7 December, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, presented to the members of the Security Council the Secretary-General's monthly report on Darfur (S/2004/947). In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General said that, since the signing of the Abuja Protocols on 9 November, the situation in Darfur had been relatively calm. However, the security situation had deteriorated rapidly towards the end of November. He said that all parties were responsible for the escalation of violence and for the breaches of the ceasefire agreement, although SLA had instigated much of the violence. He urged the international community to send an unequivocal message to all Sudanese parties to stop acts of violence. He noted that, as a result of the increased insecurity, access to vulnerable persons had fallen from 90 per cent to 80 per cent and the humanitarian situation remained dire. He blamed SLM/A and, to a lesser extent, the Government, for the decrease in access for humanitarian assistance.

Following consultations on the situation in the Sudan held on 21 December, the members of the Council authorized the President to make a statement to the press, by which the Council expressed its deep concern at the degradation of the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur and at the repeated violations of the ceasefire. It condemned those violations and called on the parties to abide by the ceasefire agreement. The members of the Council reiterated their support to the efforts of the African Union and to its mission in Darfur.

Burundi

On 1 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1577 (2004) renewing the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) for another period of six months, ending on 31 May 2005.

In statements following the adoption of resolution 1577 (2004) the representatives of France, the United Kingdom and Spain underlined the signal sent by the Council to those who claimed responsibility for the Gatumba massacre and welcomed the decision by the Government of Burundi to conduct its own inquiry aimed at identifying those responsible and to request the assistance of the International Criminal Court in prosecuting them. For his part, the representative of the United States stressed the need for the Government of Burundi to put in place the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in a timely manner in order to put an end to impunity.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

At the request of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council held an urgent meeting on 2 December during which the members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, on the alleged movement/incursion of Rwandan troops into the eastern province of North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General said that he considered the Rwandan threats troubling and destabilizing and expressed the fear that, if carried out, those threats would have a devastating effect on the whole peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The members of the Council unanimously expressed their concern regarding this latest deterioration of the security situation in the eastern part of the country.

On 7 December, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/45) relating to the situation in the border area between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which the Council noted that the reported events and threats were contrary to all peace agreements, declarations and protocols signed by regional States since 1998. It called on all States to commit themselves to making use of the mechanisms they had agreed to establish and to devote their resources to the promotion of peace and stability.

The Council members were briefed on 22 December by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in the province of North Kivu following the fighting around the town of Kanyabayonga between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and rebel groups thought to be pro-Rwandan. During the briefing, the Under-Secretary-General informed Council members of the creation by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) of a buffer zone to help humanitarian assistance reach the tens of thousands of internally displaced people following the fighting around Kanyabayonga. He also insisted on the fact that the absence of a clear strategy to reform the security sector and create a truly integrated national army would continue to endanger the peace process in the country. He answered questions from members of the Council regarding sexual abuse and exploitation by MONUC personnel. He regretted, in this regard, that the United Nations was criticized at the very moment it was devising a strategy to tackle this problem and sanction those responsible.

Mission to Central Africa

The Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, presented on 7 December the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/934). During his presentation, Ambassador de La Sablière underlined the progress made in the peace processes both in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He warned against the difficulties and challenges facing those two countries as they approached the end of their transition periods. Among the difficulties, he mentioned the presence of FDLR in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which also created problems for Burundi, given the fact that FNL-Rwasa was finding support among ex-FAR/Interahamwe elements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Somalia

On 16 December, the Permanent Representative of the Philippines and Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) presented his statement to the Security Council on the mid-term report of the Somalia Monitoring Group, in which it was noted that the arms embargo continued to be violated by individuals and groups in and outside Somalia and that countries in the region lacked the means to properly monitor the implementation of the embargo. The members of the Council were of the view that the peace process in Somalia needed to be encouraged and reinforced by the international community as a matter of priority and that the neighbouring countries should fully implement its relevant resolutions dealing with the arms embargo.

Ethiopia and Eritrea

The Security Council held consultations on 21 December and was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, on the progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2004/973 and Corr.1). In his presentation, the Assistant Secretary-General insisted on the five points initiative of 25 November 2004 by the Government of Ethiopia to resolve the stalemate in the situation between the two countries. He encouraged Council members, in this regard, to react positively to the Ethiopian initiative to help resolve the border dispute, and reiterated the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report that the demarcation process must be based on the decision of the Boundary Commission, confirming that his good offices through his Special Envoy would continue to be available. The Council adopted a statement to the press, in which it welcomed the peace plan of the Government of Ethiopia and the continued acceptance by Eritrea of the Boundary Commission's decision. The Council also encouraged the two countries to work towards a full normalization of their relations and to reiterate their commitment to the Algiers Agreement.

Middle East

Palestine

Stressing on 16 December that there was, once again, a window of opportunity to revitalize the peace process, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs urged the international community to encourage the parties to persevere as they moved along the narrow and difficult road to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Both parties seemed to have realized the potential for change inherent in the present situation. A recent poll had shown that Palestinians once again looked to the future with hope.

Israel/Syrian Arab Republic

On 15 December, the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was extended for six months, until 30 June 2005, by a resolution adopted unanimously, accompanied by a presidential statement in which the Council identified itself with the Secretary-General's view that "the situation in the Middle East is very tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached". It is worth recalling that UNDOF has supervised the ceasefire and disengagement between Israel and Syria since 1974.

Iraq

On 13 December, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, told the Council in a briefing that, against the backdrop of the overall difficult security situation and polarized public opinion, the upcoming elections would represent a test of the new political order in Iraq and of the transition process under way. It was critical for the elections to provide a platform for the expression of all shades of Iraqi political opinion. While violence, much of it extreme in its brutality and indiscriminate in nature, had disrupted a significant portion of the country, he was convinced that most Iraqis abhorred such violence and demanded a

way out of the situation through the establishment of a government that enjoyed the assent of the majority of Iraqis.

The representative of Iraq insisted that few issues before Iraq loomed larger than the election. He wondered how the United Nations could play the "leading role" mandated by resolution 1546 (2004) if it remained largely insulated from the Iraqis. The phrase "as circumstances permit" should not be used to justify insufficient presence on the ground in Iraq, he stressed.

No action was taken by the Council.

Asia and the Pacific

Bougainville

On 23 September, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Bougainville. The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Danilo Türk, briefed the Council on the latest developments in the Bougainville peace process.

The members of the Council welcomed the adoption of the Constitution and the progress made towards the destruction of arms. They insisted on the important role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and agreed on the extension of its mandate for a period of six months (until June 2005) as proposed by the Secretary-General in a letter addressed to the President of the Council dated 21 December 2004 (S/2004/1015), after a request from the Government of Papua New Guinea.

The President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General, in a letter, that the Council members took note of the recommendation contained in his letter. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council within three months on an assessment of the situation on the ground and on a mission-closure plan.

Other

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

The Security Council held an open debate on 14 December on protection of civilians in armed conflict under the presidency of Abdelaziz Belkhadem, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, gave an assessment of progress made in the implementation of the 10-points platform he had presented the previous year to the Council. Following this biennial debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement, in which it reaffirmed its strong condemnation of all acts of violence targeting civilians during armed conflicts. The Council recognized the importance of a comprehensive, coherent and action-oriented approach to protection of civilians in armed conflict. It stressed also the need for regional and subregional organizations to develop a regional protection strategy.

Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004)

The Security Council had called for the establishment of the Committee in resolution 1540 (2004), adopted on 28 April 2004, and decided that all States should refrain from providing any support to non-State actors that attempted to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery.

In his first report to the Council, on 9 December, Ambassador Mihnea Motoc (Romania), Chairman of the Committee, said that the Committee's efforts had been focused, until now, on making the Committee fully functional and operational before it started consideration of the first national reports submitted by Member States. He added that, with a structure now in place which included four experts and two more to be nominated, the monitoring body was now ready to begin consideration of the national reports. He informed the Council that the Committee had decided to establish three subcommittees with a view to sharing the task of considering reports, each covering an equal number of States grouped in alphabetical order.

Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities

Pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 1526 (2004), the Chairman of the Committee should brief the members of the Council every 120 days on the activities of the Committee and the activities of the Monitoring Team.

The Committee has put a great deal of effort into formulating the written assessment pursuant to resolution 1455 (2003). The Monitoring Team has, inter alia, assisted the Committee in the monitoring of States' implementation of the sanctions measures.

The priorities of the Committee remain its list and the identification of possible improvements to the current sanctions measures, which should be forwarded to the Security Council prior to the adoption of a new resolution in mid-2005.

Chairmen of sanctions committees and working groups

On 22 December the outgoing Chairmen of the committees and working groups of the Security Council, namely Ambassador Mounir Akram (Pakistan), Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia, Ambassador Gunter Pleuger (Germany), Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire, Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz (Chile), Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, and Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, assessed the work of their respective committees and working groups. They underlined the crucial and central role those bodies played in the work of the Council, from combating terrorism to preventing and resolving conflicts to implementing and monitoring sanctions.